

TO: Neighborhood Plan Subcommittee

From: Kathleen Fox, Senior Planner, Planning and Development Review Department, Comprehensive Planning Division

RE: Discussion on a Variety of Issues Relating to the Neighborhood Plan Amendment Process

Date: February 8, 2012

	Issue	Discussion
1 Fee Waivers- Contact Teams	We currently waive application fees for Neighborhood Plan Contact Teams, but the Code does not address them as qualified for a fee waiver.	Should staff continue the policy of waiving application fees for Neighborhood Plan Contact Teams? Suggestion: Amend the Code to grant contact teams a fee waiver for individual, subdistrict and area-wide amendments.
2 Fee Waivers- SMART Housing	We currently waive application fees for certified SMART Housing developments, but the Code does not list plan amendments as one of its 29 fee waivers.	Should staff continue the policy of waiving application fees for certified SMART Housing developments? Suggestion: Amend Section 25-1-704(A) of the Code to add neighborhood plan amendments to the list of SMART Housing fee waivers to be consistent with our practice.
3 Pre- application meeting	Section 25-1-804 (3) and (4) lists what the applicant should provide at the pre-application meeting. However, it does not specifically state the applicant should bring the information on an application form to the meeting. Requiring this would result in a more accurate final application and notification to the neighborhood.	Should an applicant be required to provide the required information on the application form at the pre-application meeting? Suggestion: Add language to the referenced section that requires the applicant to provide the information on the application form at the pre-application meeting.

	Issue	Discussion
<p data-bbox="222 180 243 204">4</p> <p data-bbox="142 253 338 399">Subdistrict and Area Wide Amendments</p>	<p data-bbox="363 180 1152 358">Section 25-1-804 (E) addresses when an application for an area-wide or subdistrict amendment may be submitted. The current language does not clearly address the following four issues that would be beneficial to contact teams:</p> <p data-bbox="363 367 1152 480">1) The intent has been that contact teams can request this type of amendment every 2 years for each planning area within their neighborhood plan.</p> <p data-bbox="363 521 1152 634">2) City-initiated amendments should not prohibit a contact team from filing their own amendment every 2 years.</p> <p data-bbox="363 675 1152 821">3) "Most recent council action" is intended to mean approval or denial of a subdistrict or area-wide amendment (it does not include individual amendments such as a FLUM change).</p> <p data-bbox="363 862 1152 976">4) Planning Commission and the Director should be able to file these amendments at any time (Council is already permitted to do this).</p>	<p data-bbox="1173 180 1992 358">1) Is it understood that a neighborhood plan contact team may initiate an amendment for their own planning area (EX: Crestview) without affecting the submittal time of another planning area (EX: Wooten) with the same combined neighborhood plan?</p> <p data-bbox="1173 407 1992 521">2) Should it be clarified that a city-initiated subdistrict or area-wide amendment does not prohibit the contact team from filing an application within the 2-years?</p> <p data-bbox="1173 561 1992 634">3) Should the language "most recent council action" be clarified?</p> <p data-bbox="1173 675 1992 789">4) Should the Director (of PDRD) and Planning Commission be allowed to submit an application at any time?</p> <p data-bbox="1173 829 1992 902">Suggestion: Revise Section 25-1-804 (E) to address these four issues.</p>
<p data-bbox="222 1021 243 1045">5</p> <p data-bbox="142 1094 338 1159">Land Use Commission</p>	<p data-bbox="363 1021 1152 1159">Throughout Article 16, <i>Neighborhood Plan Amendments</i>, the Planning Commission and Land Use Commission are both referenced. It can be confusing to use two different names.</p>	<p data-bbox="1173 1021 1992 1159">Should this Article reference Planning Commission for consistency? Referencing the Land Use Commission generally means Planning Commission and/or Zoning and Platting Commission.</p> <p data-bbox="1173 1208 1992 1321">Suggestion: Refer to the Planning Commission because they are charged with neighborhood plan amendment applications.</p>

	Issue	Discussion
<p data-bbox="212 175 237 201">6</p> <p data-bbox="132 250 317 354">Feb/July Application Window</p>	<p data-bbox="348 175 1108 279">Neighborhood plan amendment applications may only be submitted once a year (in-cycle). This restriction leads to several issues:</p> <ol data-bbox="396 289 1146 1317" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="396 289 1146 393">1) Because applicants are meeting a deadline they often have not met with the neighborhood or neighborhood plan contact team. <li data-bbox="396 441 1146 743">2) Because communication between the applicant and the neighborhood usually begins after the application has been filed, there are often delays in the process. To prevent cases from expiring when active communication is taking place, legal notification is mailed and cases are placed on the Planning Commission agenda. (They expire after 180 days if not scheduled for a public hearing.) <li data-bbox="396 792 1146 971">3) A large number of cases are postponed at Planning Commission because they are not ready to be heard. This makes it difficult for neighborhood plan contact teams to know when the public hearing will actually take place. <li data-bbox="396 1019 1146 1317">4) One staff person has been the case manager for plan amendments since early 2009. Contact teams have said they like having one staff person to communicate with. However, the current application window results in uneven work load for the case manager. As development picks up, it is likely one staff person will not be able to handle the concentration of applications. 	<p data-bbox="1178 175 1934 321">What can be done to encourage early communication between applicants and contact teams as well as the surrounding neighbors in order to avoid delays, postponements, and withdrawals of cases?</p> <p data-bbox="1178 370 1969 435">Do contact teams find it difficult to know when a case is actually going to be heard at a public hearing?</p> <p data-bbox="1178 483 1881 548">Is it beneficial for contact teams to have one case manager to communicate with?</p> <p data-bbox="1178 597 1927 776">Suggestion: Explore ways to encourage early communication and better plan amendment applications. This might be accomplished through holding a work session with all interested parties.</p>

ARTICLE 15. S.M.A.R.T. HOUSING.

§ 25-1-704 FEE WAIVERS

- (A) **The director may, in accordance with Subsection (B), waive all or a portion of the following fees, as set by the City's annual fee ordinance, for a S.M.A.R.T. Housing development:**
- (1) Public Works Construction Inspection Fee;
 - (2) Watershed Protection and Development Review - Development Assessment Fee;
 - (3) Watershed Protection and Development Review - Traffic Impact Analysis Fee;
 - (4) Watershed Protection and Development Review - Traffic Impact Analysis Revision Fee;
 - (5) Regular Zoning Fee;
 - (6) Interim to Permanent Zoning Fee;
 - (7) Miscellaneous Zoning Fee;
 - (8) Zoning Verification Letter Fee;
 - (9) Board of Adjustment Fee;
 - (10) Managed Growth Agreement Fee;
 - (11) Planned Development Area Fee;
 - (12) Preliminary Subdivision Fee;
 - (13) Final Subdivision Fee;
 - (14) Final Without Preliminary Subdivision Fee;
 - (15) Miscellaneous Subdivision Fee;
 - (16) Consolidated Site Plan Fee;
 - (17) Miscellaneous Site Plan Fee;
 - (18) Site Plan Revision Fee;
 - (19) Site Plan - Construction Element Fee;
 - (20) Building Review Plan Fee;
 - (21) Building Permit Fee;
 - (22) Electric Permit Fee;
 - (23) Mechanical Permit Fee;

- (24) Plumbing Permit Fee;
- (25) Concrete Permit Fee;
- (26) Demolition Permit Fee;
- (27) Electric Service Inspection Fee;
- (28) Move House Onto Lot Fee;
- (29) Move House Onto City Right-of-Way Fee.

ARTICLE 16. NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN AMENDMENTS.

§ 25-1-801 DEFINITIONS.

In this article:

- (1) DIRECTOR means the director of the Planning and Development Review Department.
- (2) NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN CONTACT TEAM means the individuals designated to implement an adopted neighborhood plan. The neighborhood plan contact team is a neighborhood organization that may qualify as an interested party for purposes of notice, appeal, and other processes if all other qualifications for interested party status are satisfied. The neighborhood plan contact team is a separate body apart from any other existing or future neighborhood organization.

§ 25-1-802 DIRECTOR'S REVIEW OF NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN.

The director shall conduct a general review of a neighborhood plan not earlier than five years after the adoption of the plan and may recommend amendments of a plan to the Planning Commission and council. The director shall include neighborhood stakeholder input in the review process.

§ 25-1-803 INITIATION OF NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN AMENDMENT.

A neighborhood plan amendment may be initiated by:

- (1) for an amendment regarding an individual property:
 - (a) the owner of the subject property;
 - (b) the council;
 - (c) the Planning Commission;
 - (d) the director; or

- (e) the neighborhood plan contact team for the planning area in which the property is located; or
- (2) for an amendment regarding an area-wide or subdistrict-wide recommendation:
 - (a) the council;
 - (b) the Planning Commission;
 - (c) the director; or
 - (d) the neighborhood plan contact team for the affected neighborhood plan area.

§ 25-1-804 APPLICATION TO AMEND NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

- (A) A pre-application meeting between the director's staff and an applicant is required before the applicant may submit an application to amend a neighborhood plan to the director. At the meeting:
 - (1) the staff shall describe the application process to the applicant;
 - (2) the applicant shall describe the proposed neighborhood plan amendment to the staff;
 - (3) if the applicant is proposing a change to the future land use map, the applicant shall the proposed change, including the address, boundaries, acreage, current and proposed future land use map categories, and current and proposed uses; and**
 - (4) if the applicant is proposing a text change, the applicant shall provide the proposed language and an explanation of the change.**
- (B) For an application regarding an individual property, except as provided in Subsection (C):
 - (1) the director may accept an application to amend a neighborhood plan not earlier than one year after the adoption of the plan;
 - (2) after the one year anniversary of a plan adoption, the director may accept an application to amend a plan recommendation relating to an individual property not more frequently than once every 12 months; and
 - (3) an application may be filed only during the month established by the director under Section 25-1-811 (Map; Filing Dates), unless:**
 - (a) the application is submitted by a neighborhood plan contact team for the planning area in which the property is located; or**
 - (b) a neighborhood plan contact team for the planning area in which the property is located has given written approval of the application.**

(4) An applicant may not file an application for an amendment that is substantially the same as an application denied by council until one year after the council action denying the prior application.

- (C) The director may accept an application regarding an individual property at a time other than as provided in Subsection (B) if the director determines that:
- (1) prohibiting the filing would result in a hardship to the applicant, and the development proposed by the applicant will not adversely affect public health, safety, and welfare;
 - (2) a clerical error regarding the designated use of the subject property exists on the future land use map of the neighborhood plan or in the text of the plan;
 - (3) the person submitting the application has received a letter from the director of the appropriate City department stating that the project:
 - (a) is not subject to current City environmental regulations, but is proposed to be developed under current City environmental regulations;
 - (b) promotes the recruitment or retention of an employment center with 100 or more employees; or
 - (c) is a S.M.A.R.T. Housing certified project in which at least 40 percent of the proposed units are reasonably priced as provided in **Sections 25-1-703 (C) and (D) (Program Requirements)**; or
 - (4) council has initiated the application.
- (D) An applicant may appeal a decision of the director under Subsection (C)(1) to the Planning Commission.

(E) For an area-wide or subdistrict-wide application:

- (1) the director may accept an application to amend a neighborhood plan not earlier than two years after the adoption of the plan;**
- (2) the director may accept an application not earlier than two years after the most recent council action on the plan; and**
- (3) an application initiated by council may be filed at any time.**

§ 25-1-805 NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN CONTACT TEAM.

- (A) The director shall initiate the formation of a neighborhood plan contact team.
- (B) The neighborhood plan contact team shall to the greatest extent practicable include at least one representative from each of the following groups within a neighborhood plan area:
- (1) property owners;

- (2) residential renters;
- (3) business owners; and
- (4) neighborhood organization members owning or renting property within the neighborhood plan area.

(C) Representatives shall to the greatest extent possible be drawn from the group of persons involved in the development of the neighborhood plan.

(D) The neighborhood plan contact team shall annually submit a list of its officers and members, including individual contact information and applicable membership category under Subsection (B), to the director.

(E) The neighborhood plan contact team shall submit new bylaws or changes in existing bylaws to the director. The bylaws shall be based upon a standardized template provided by the director and shall address roles and responsibilities, boundaries, membership, decision-making, meetings and meeting notification, officers and duties, amendments to the bylaws, finances, and conflicts of interest.

(F) Before the date on which the Planning Commission is scheduled to consider a proposed neighborhood plan amendment, the neighborhood plan contact team may submit a letter to the director stating its recommendation on the proposed amendment. The neighborhood plan contact team shall also identify any conflict of interest as defined in the bylaws of the neighborhood plan contact team.

Source: Ord. 20080306-073; Ord. 20091217-053.

§ 25-1-806 NOTICE AND PUBLIC HEARING.

(A) The director shall give notice of the filing of an application for a proposed neighborhood plan amendment under Section 25-1-133 (Notice Of Applications And Administrative Decisions).

(B) The director shall conduct a community meeting on a proposed neighborhood plan amendment prior to the date on which the Planning Commission is scheduled to consider the amendment. The director shall give notice of the meeting under Section 25-1-132(A) (Notice of Public Hearing).

(C) The Planning Commission and the council shall each hold a public hearing on a proposed neighborhood plan amendment.

(D) This subsection prescribes notice for a public hearing on a proposed neighborhood plan amendment regarding an individual property.

- (1) For a hearing before the Planning Commission, the director shall give notice under Section 25-1-132(A) (Notice Of Public Hearing).

- (2) For a hearing before council, the director shall give notice under Section 25-1-132(B)(2) (Notice Of Public Hearing).

(3) The applicant is responsible for the cost of notice, unless the applicant is a neighborhood plan contact team. In that event, the City is responsible for the cost of notice.

(E) This subsection prescribes notice for a public hearing on a proposed neighborhood plan amendment regarding an area-wide or subdistrict-wide recommendation.

(1) The director shall give notice of a public hearing before the Planning Commission or council to:

(a) each notice owner of property located within the proposed amendment boundaries;

(b) each City of Austin utility account address within the proposed amendment boundaries; and

(c) each neighborhood plan contact team and registered neighborhood organization within the proposed amendment boundaries and within 500 feet of the proposed amendment boundaries.

(2) The City is responsible for the cost of notice.

Source: Ord. 20080306-073; Ord. 20091217-053.

§ 25-1-807 EXPIRATION OF APPLICATION.

(A) A neighborhood plan amendment application expires if the director does not schedule the application for a public hearing:

(1) by the Planning Commission before the 181st day after the date of filing; or

(2) by the Planning Commission or council before the 181st day after the date on which the Planning Commission or council grants an indefinite postponement of a scheduled public hearing.

(B) Except as provided in Subsection (D), a neighborhood plan amendment application expires if the council does not adopt an ordinance before the 361st day after council closes the public hearing on the application.

(C) Except as provided in Subsection (D), a neighborhood plan amendment application initially submitted before the effective date of this section expires 180 days after the effective date of this section.

(D) An applicant may file one request with the director and one request with council to extend an application that will expire under Subsection (B) or Subsection (C). The request must be in writing, be filed before the application expires, state good cause for the extension, and be for not more than 180 days.

Source: Ord. 20091217-053.

§ 25-1-808 LAND USE COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING AND RECOMMENDATION.

- (A) The **Land Use Commission** shall hold a public hearing on a neighborhood plan amendment application not later than the 90th day after the **date the application is filed**.
- (B) The **Land Use Commission** shall make a recommendation to the council on a neighborhood plan amendment application not later than the 14th day after the **Land Use Commission** closes the public hearing on the application.
- (C) If the **Land Use Commission** does not adopt a recommendation on an application, the Director shall forward the application to council without a Land Use Commission recommendation.
- (D) If the **Land Use Commission** does not hold a public hearing in accordance with Subsection (A), the applicant may file a written request for a hearing as prescribed in Section 25-2-282(E).
- (E) The Director shall report the **Land Use Commission's** recommendation on each neighborhood plan amendment application to the council.

§ 25-1-809 CITY COUNCIL HEARING AND RECOMMENDATION.

- (A) The council shall hold a public hearing on a neighborhood plan amendment application not later than the 40th day after the date of the **Land Use Commission** recommendation.
- (B) Section 25-2-283(C) shall apply to requests for postponement of the public hearing on a neighborhood plan amendment application.

§ 25-1-810 RECOMMENDATION CRITERIA.

- (A) The director may not recommend approval of a neighborhood plan amendment unless the requirements of Subsections (B) and (C) are satisfied.
- (B) The applicant must demonstrate that:
 - (1) the proposed amendment is appropriate because of a mapping or textual error or omission made when the original plan was adopted or during subsequent amendments;
 - (2) the denial of the proposed amendment would jeopardize public health, safety, or welfare;
 - (3) the proposed amendment is appropriate:
 - (a) because of a material change in circumstances since the adoption of the plan; and
 - (b) denial would result in a hardship to the applicant;
 - (4) the proposed project:

- (a) provides environmental protection that is superior to the protection that would otherwise be achieved under existing zoning and development regulations; or
 - (b) promotes the recruitment or retention of an employment center with 100 or more employees;
 - (5) the proposed amendment is consistent with the goals and objectives of the neighborhood plan; or
 - (6) the proposed amendment promotes additional S.M.A.R.T. Housing opportunities.
- (C) The applicant must demonstrate that:
- (1) the proposed amendment complies with applicable regulations and standards established by Title 25 (Land Development), the objectives of Chapter 25-2 (Zoning), and the purposes of the zoning district proposed for the subject property; and
 - (2) the proposed amendment is consistent with sound planning principles.

Source: Ord. 20080306-073; Ord. 20091217-053.

§ 25-1-811 MAP; FILING DATES.

The director shall establish a map designating the area of the City for which an application to amend a neighborhood plan must be submitted in February and the area for which an application must be submitted in July.

Neighborhood Plan Amendments

1. Survey regarding submission of plan amendment applications

Dear Neighborhood Plan Contact Team Member:

Currently, the City's Land Development Code (Section 25-1-804 (B)) states applicants may submit neighborhood plan amendment applications at specific times during the year depending on the location of the property. The submittal period for properties located west of IH-35 is February and properties located east of IH-35 is July.

Over the last few years, city staff has noticed inefficiencies in the neighborhood plan amendment application process. We would like your suggestions on the best way to address the issues of concern listed below:

1) MULTIPLE COMMUNITY MEETINGS IN A SHORT TIME FRAME:

A large number of applications located in one planning area can result in multiple plan amendment meetings. This can place a burden on contact team members attending several meetings in a short time period.

2) EXPIRATION OF APPLICATIONS:

Neighborhood plan amendment applications expire if they are not on the Planning Commission agenda after 181 days (6 months) of submittal. As a result of the February/July open application period, many applications are submitted with unresolved issues because the applicant did not meet with the contact team or other interested parties prior to submittal. Quite often, more than six months is needed to resolve these issues which may require the case to be scheduled on the Planning Commission agenda to keep the case active. As issues are discussed between parties, the case might need to be postponed multiple times, which makes it difficult for citizens to know the dates of the public hearings.

3) STAFF WORKLOAD ISSUES:

The city has one staff member who manages all plan amendment applications to ensure a consistent process. Although we have had positive feedback from contact teams and applicants having one case manager, it sometimes results in delayed community meetings due to the high volume of applications coming in a short time period.

4) COORDINATION WITH CONTACT TEAMS:

Because there is a limited time frame for submitting plan amendment applications and each contact team sets their own meeting schedules (monthly, quarterly, as needed) this can create challenges for city staff and applicants who are attempting to meet with contact teams to discuss applications. This can result in cases not moving forward in a timely manner and jeopardizing cases being postponed or expiring.

We are searching for solutions that resolve the issues as discussed above. For example, accepting plan amendment applications year round will address the challenges associated with multiple meetings in a short time and coordinating with contact teams on a short time frame.

We would like contact teams to give their opinion on this suggestion and/or provide us with other ideas. Our goal is to have a smooth, efficient process that works for everyone involved.

To express your opinion on this important issue, please respond to the following questions by Wednesday, May 13th.

For more information on Neighborhood Plan Amendments, refer to the Land Development Code, Article 16, Section 25-1-801 thru 25-1-811.

Neighborhood Plan Amendments

*** 1. Please tell us your preference on staff's suggestion to minimize the inefficiencies (choose one)**

- Keep the application process the same: February and July "in-cycle" period
- Change the application process: Allow plan amendment applications any time of the year (after the 1-year waiting period)
- No Preference

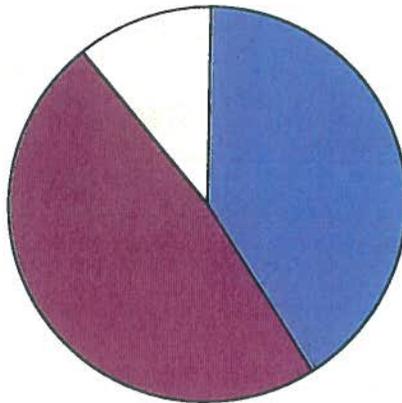
2. What is your opinion on staff's suggestion to eliminate the February/July application window?

3. What other ideas do you have to make the process more efficient?

Neighborhood Plan Amendments

Please tell us your preference on staff's suggestion to minimize the inefficiencies (choose one)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Keep the application process the same: February and July "in-cycle" period	40.7%	11
Change the application process: Allow plan amendment applications any time of the year (after the 1-year waiting period)	48.1%	13
No Preference	11.1%	3
<i>answered question</i>		27
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Neighborhood Plan Amendments

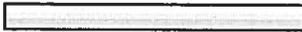


- Keep the application process the same: February and July "in-cycle" period
- Change the application process: Allow plan amendment applications any time of the year (after the 1-year waiting period)
- No Preference

Neighborhood Plan Amendments



1. Please tell us your preference on staff's suggestion to minimize the inefficiencies (choose one)

		Response Percent	Response Count
Keep the application process the same: February and July "in-cycle" period		40.7%	11
Change the application process: Allow plan amendment applications any time of the year (after the 1-year waiting period)		48.1%	13
No Preference		11.1%	3
answered question			27
skipped question			0

2. What is your opinion on staff's suggestion to eliminate the February/July application window?

	Response Count
	22
answered question	22
skipped question	5

3. What other ideas do you have to make the process more efficient?

	Response Count
	19
answered question	19
skipped question	8

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Q2. What is your opinion on staff's suggestion to eliminate the February/July application window?

1	If it is changed the amendments will be constant and there will be a lot more.	May 14, 2011 11:09 AM
2	May need the flexibility in application period to more evenly distribute the workload. Shift resources to meet demand. Is it also seasonal?	May 13, 2011 10:21 AM
3	Sounds reasonable to me.	May 12, 2011 7:54 AM
4	Make it smooth for the persons managing the applications...if eliminating the Feb/Jul does this then make it so	May 12, 2011 7:13 AM
5	What would staff suggest replace the Feb/July application window? External hurdles were stated - what other barriers need to be considered for an effective, transparent, doable process?	May 12, 2011 5:55 AM
6	Is it really a solution, or will there be other possible bottlenecks in the process? Does there need to be a meeting for every specific request?	May 11, 2011 3:17 PM
7	With the city growing it seems to make sense to spread the work out over the full year.	May 11, 2011 3:15 PM
8	I have only served on my contact team for about a month so it is difficult for me to weigh in but it seems that this would allow planning implementation to flow smoother. On the other hand I don't have enough experience to consider the down side of such a change and there may be some considerable down side.	May 9, 2011 6:43 PM
9	Do not support; once a year applications make speculative changes less likely.	May 9, 2011 8:20 AM
10	It is a bad idea to change. We don't get paid so we have to work and don't need to be on are toes all the time	May 7, 2011 11:58 AM
11	I don't like it at all. I am a volunteer & I don't want to have to spend my time considering plan amendments throughout the year.	May 7, 2011 10:15 AM
12	I think it is good	May 6, 2011 12:40 PM
13	Efficiency is only one value. Having developers read, understand, and respect the FLUM and the development guidelines outlined in the Neighborhood Plans is of higher value. For a cooperative developer who is willing to work with the Planning Team it seems to me that a regular order is a good thing (Feb-July), as it allows for full discussion leading to a mutual agreement about Plan modification. For the speculative developer who merely wants to maximize profit by changing zoning in a way that contradicts the Plan, a Feb-June time window allows NPCT's time to try to dissuade the developer or mobilize opposition. The any-time cycle makes it too easy for developers to simply get a City Council member to trump the Plan at any time by simply championing the developer's project. Extreme case in point, the PICO PUD. In that case the NP, the PC and City Staff all agreed that the development went against the Plan. It got approved anyway by City Council fiat, through the PUD designation.	May 4, 2011 1:47 PM
14	Applications in the Nov-Dec-Jan holiday period is a hostile tactic used by developers to reduce attendance at such meetings.	May 3, 2011 10:42 PM
15	Sounds more efficient, Jean Mather	May 1, 2011 2:48 PM

Q2. What is your opinion on staff's suggestion to eliminate the February/July application window?

16	Permitting amendments at any time in the year discourages planning and erodes the importance of the plans. The point of the plans is for them to be followed. Those seeking amendments are seeking to alter the adopted plans. The threshold for amendments to approved plans that took years of work should remain high. Accepting applications year round will only mean potential meetings year round for planning teams. While I cannot speak to staff efficiencies, accepting applications year round will increase the planning team burden not reduce it.	Apr 30, 2011 3:30 PM
17	It's an important window. It allows plan contact teams to focus their attention during this period. If the window is widened, there is a greater likelihood of these applications being made during holiday seasons making it far more difficult to ensure community involvement. While I would be in favor of perhaps modifying the window, it should ensure that November through January is off-limits for plan amendments at the absolute least.	Apr 30, 2011 11:55 AM
18	I like changing the application process to be year round but noted next to this suggestion states that it will be addressed after the 1-year submission date? How is that going to expedite the process from how it is working now?	Apr 29, 2011 10:35 PM
19	Allowing applicants to apply to staff without making contact with the Planning Teams may help a few honest but ignorant folks to not get hung up with delays but the bad actors who know they need to meet with Teams to avoid delays will be submitting even more unreasonable requests - sidestepping the process - which could create even more work for staff and Team volunteers - instead, revise the 6 mo rule to get before Planning Commission so that an applicant can take as much time as necessary to work with the neighborhoods to find consensus - which would save staff time. That puts the burden on the applicant to find creative solutions and make some compromises with the neighbors relieving staff of trying to push both sides to make a decision or fight it out at PC. At any point in the extended negotiation period either side asks for the case to be resolved at PC then staff can set the hearing, all sides can make their case, and the process ends with a PC decision. A change in practice at PC should be changed so that in the case of an extended/rollover application the PC is not allowed to postpone the case on the behalf of the applicant or the neighborhood Team. PC should only postpone or delay a decision on these extended cases when requested by staff or a fellow Commissioner. In order to be allowed to extend the process beyond the 6 mo rule, the applicant then must agree that they will not re-apply for at least one year after the final decision by the PC or their voluntary withdrawal from the extended process.	Apr 29, 2011 9:15 PM
20	That's not the biggest problem for us. The problem is the requirement of 2 meetings for each amendment: the one we have where we vote, and the one you hold where we vote again.	Apr 29, 2011 8:45 PM
21	If the applicant hasn't timely contacted the contact team, that is that applicant's problem (and a red flag as far as how they might work with their neighbors and the City going forward). There doesn't need to be Planning Commission jiggering to keep an incomplete application open - tell them to come back when they are ready. It wouldn't hurt to build in a notification process, some way that the applicant could show they have made good faith effort to a hypothetical non-responsive contact team. (Neighborhoods spent years of their time developing these plans, and more years now implementing them. It is realistic to expect a	Apr 29, 2011 5:18 PM

Q2. What is your opinion on staff's suggestion to eliminate the February/July application window?

similar amount of thoughtfulness from someone applying to override all that work.)

- 22 Based on my experiences (and I suspect it is this way with other contact teams) the people who set on these teams are also involved with other aspects of the community and the City of Austin as a whole. I feel that these active community members become overwhelmed with meeting , after meeting , after meeting. I also suspect we are just devastated when we work all these some times years, months, weeks, days and hours to develop neighborhood plans, only to see a new city council completely ignore the input and hard work of those members of the community who spent so much effort helping create those plans and vote against the community and those plans. Having said all of that I think this City has a responsibility to make it as easy as it can to lighten the load of those community members who offer up their time to voluntarily set on these contact teams. I think the City should do what ever is necessary to ease the process for the contact team members.

Apr 29, 2011 4:43 PM

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Q3. What other ideas do you have to make the process more efficient?

1	Discourage plan amendments	May 14, 2011 11:09 AM
2	none	May 13, 2011 10:21 AM
3	Keep things moving rather than forced into datelines	May 12, 2011 7:13 AM
4	Is it possible for ANC/City Staff (for example) to collaborate to streamline/simplify amendment process? Could nhoods choose or be assigned an amendment month? Or amendment month assigned by sector of the city so potentially multiple contact teams could collaborate on requested amendments?	May 12, 2011 5:55 AM
5	We have had no applications for plan amendments so it is hard to comment on efficiency in the abstract.	May 11, 2011 3:17 PM
6	I like it when the property owners meet with the neighborhood contact teams in advance to pitch their idea and listen to the neighborhood's concerns.	May 11, 2011 3:15 PM
7	N/A	May 9, 2011 6:43 PM
8	Once per year applications for each neighborhood could be spread out over 12 months (in lieu of two) to even out workload.	May 9, 2011 8:20 AM
9	I don't feel that it is inefficient	May 7, 2011 11:58 AM
10	It would seem that you know best.	May 7, 2011 10:28 AM
11	I would be OK spreading application windows throughout the year as long as each neighborhood planning area only has a one month window. That should ease the application "logg jam" for staff without forcing contact teams to deal with amendments year round.	May 7, 2011 10:15 AM
12	Encourage developers to have their projects be consistent with the NP text and the FLUM. That will save everyone a lot of time and effort.	May 4, 2011 1:47 PM
13	Cutting off in July may not be rational, but end of September is reasonable. More material should be distributed by web or email enabling people to review proposal before attending meetings.	May 3, 2011 10:42 PM
14	I believe it would be worth considering a change in the notification process. I also believe plan contact teams need to be better educated on ramifications of plan amendments. While it isn't in the city's charter to side with neighborhoods (since the city needs to remain neutral), there would be great benefit for us to understand what agreeing or disagreeing to an amendment might mean. We need a notification process that is more public and less dry. Getting a letter in the mail attaches no real significance and it simply looks like a dry meeting. I would advocate that the organization requesting the amendment take on the financial burden of a notification where they have to "sell" the idea to the neighborhood upon making the notification. While this should happen in theory, it doesn't because the letters are so official looking that they're ignored by the majority of the public because a) it just looks like a city letter, b) it uses language completely unfamiliar to the average citizen, and c) it provides no real context for understanding what is really happening. Citizen involvement is crucial, but why get involved in something you don't even understand. Relying on community	Apr 30, 2011 11:55 AM

Q3. What other ideas do you have to make the process more efficient?

activists to do this creates a wholly biased view of any development. There needs to be a way to communicate with the citizenry that actually educates and increases involvement. Larry Gross Vice-Chair Montopolis Neighborhood Plan Contact Team [REDACTED]

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| 15 | The recommendations already fulfilled should be taken off if already met. Amendments should not be limited to one amendment if the community has decided to do more than one per year. In coordination with contact teams, one or two representatives from each contact team should meet monthly with the city staff person and speak on behalf of their respective contact team. the representative from the contact team will not have to be the same person all the time but should be a rotating assignment and been approved by the contact team and noted in the minutes of when the contact team made the decision to have whomever represent their contact team for that month. This way the staff person does not have to go to every single meeting, instead one meeting and the contact team members have made a commitment to attend meetings as needed so this would hold each community accountable to meeting once a month with the city staff person. | Apr 29, 2011 10:35 PM |
| 16 | Besides hiring more amendment staff or getting an internship program going with UT Regional Planning, then the dept. should spend more time and money on outreach to realtors, builders and consultants by sending them all registered, receipt requested notice of the meetings when these changes in policy will occur and another upon adoption of the policy so they can't claim ignorance and PC and BOA Commissioners feel confident the applicants should have known better. These certified letters should also be sent to anyone who visits or fills out an application so they know of the 6 mo rule and what they give up (an additional year before they can re-apply) if they agree to an extended process and end up wasting everyone's time because they won't budge. Get PIO to do some catchy PSAs like the Grease Blob's gonna get you" and place these ads in trade mags, websites, and community papers every Feb. and July until people realize there are new rules in town to try to resolve development issues at the neighborhood level, not on TV6. By bad actors, Brandon Testa and the Dram Shop comes to mind. | Apr 29, 2011 9:15 PM |
| 17 | See above. | Apr 29, 2011 8:45 PM |
| 18 | Obviously, a planning process that results in useable plans and viable contact team makes most of the stated issues go away. Additionally, some of the earliest plans are well-outdated at this point, making it impossible for even a diligent applicant to address current issues.) As staff continues the planning process with new neighborhoods, and works with neighborhoods to update plans that are at their strategic horizon, build that in to the process. | Apr 29, 2011 5:18 PM |
| 19 | One of the best ways would be to make it much more difficult for someone to violate the integrity of the adopted neighborhood plan. As past experience has shown us, every one knows how easy it is, how anyone with enough money and political muscle can bend, flex and massage any neighborhood plan in to what ever they need it to be to fit their agenda. | Apr 29, 2011 4:43 PM |